

The Concept of Communication Skills in Medicine



King Saud University.

<https://www.skillpro.com/webinar/communicating-to-reduce-misunderstanding-and-conflict-7/>

OBJECTIVES

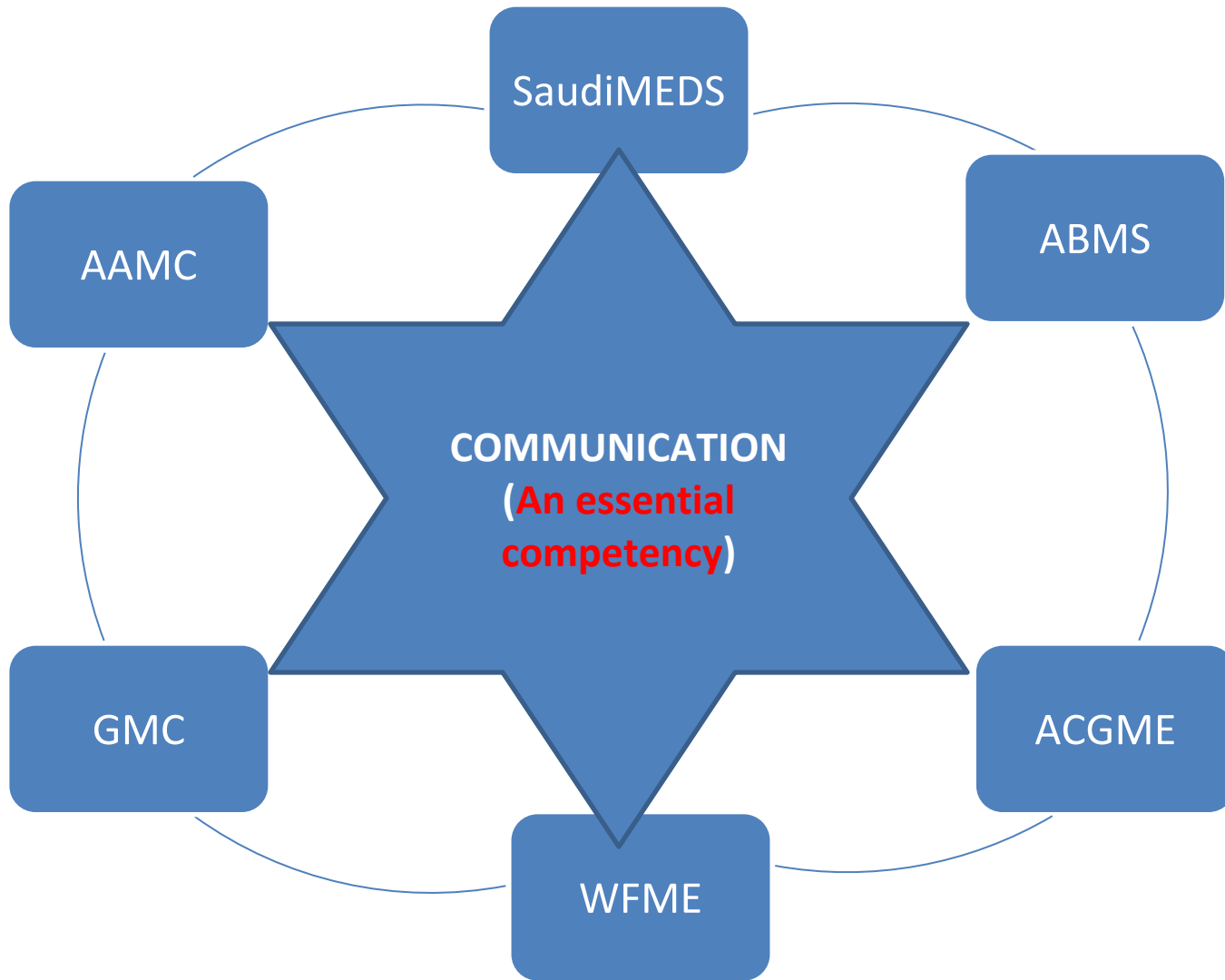
At the end of today's session students should be able to;

- ❑ Define communication, its theory and types.
- ❑ Describe the importance of communication in medicine.
- ❑ Demonstrate effective communication in day to day practice.
- ❑ Overcome barriers to effective communication.
- ❑ Apply the principles of communication and collaboration skills in PBL sessions

Communication Skills

There is substantial evidence indicating that communication skills are crucial in the development of satisfactory health care provider-patient relationships. [1-4]

- In the 21st century, teaching and assessment of communication skills in medical schools are well recognized [5].
- Effective communication is considered to be one of the most important skills of a physician [6].



Saudi MEDS: Saudi MEDs Framework, **ACGME:** Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education , **ABMS:** American Board of Medical Specialties, **AAMC:** Association of American Medical Colleges, **GMC:**General Medical Council, **WFME:** World Federation for Medical Education (7-11)

What is Communication?

- The act by which information is shared.
- It is the process by which we relate and interact with other people.
- It includes listening & understanding with passion & respect as well as expressing views, ideas and passing information to others in a clear manner.

COMMUNICATION THEORY

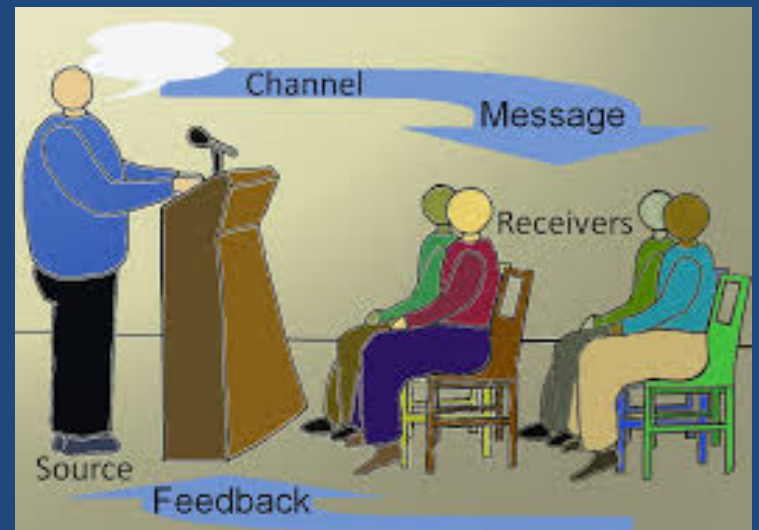
- Communication is a learned skill based on 3 pillars:
 - Accuracy
 - Efficiency
 - Supportiveness

All of the above combine to contribute to the effectiveness of good communication

Non-Verbal



Verbal



WRITTEN COMMUNICATION

- Clarify your thoughts and the purpose
- Identify the key points, facts and themes
- Decide on a logical order
- Use short paragraphs and sentences
- Compose a strong introduction and ending

<http://www.learndirect.com/store/business-workplace/communication-skills>

<http://www.englishgrammar.org/effective-business-writing>



Verbal (mainly focuses on questioning)

- **Open** (broad) – gives control to respondent, allows disclosure.

e.g. explain how you felt on the 1st day of college?

- **Open** (focused) – gives control to respondent within a given area, encourages disclosure of feelings.

e.g. Did you have a good day at school

- **Closed** – control is with interviewer, checks information.

e.g. Do you smoke? 'Yes' or 'No'

- **Leading** – control with interviewer, suggests desired response.

e.g. What year in the 15th century did Columbus arrive in the Americas?

Verbal Communication

❖ Speaking to the person

- ✓ Look straight in the eye
- ✓ make eye contact
- ✓ Show respect

❖ Clear message

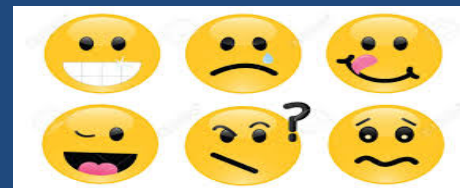
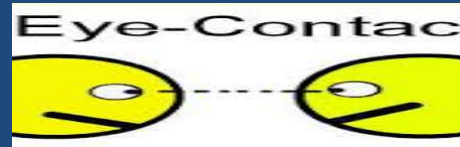
- ✓ Relevant
- ✓ Use understandable language
- ✓ Support by illustrations if needed

❖ Good listener

- ✓ Allow others to understand the message and reply
- ✓ Listen carefully
- ✓ Make a dialogue and not one way instruction

NON VERBAL

- Listening (active and passive)
- Silence
- Touch
- Hand gestures
- Eye contact
- Posture
- Facial expression



Effective Communication

Specifically, effective communication skills have been shown to improve providers' interviewing skills, facilitate information-gathering, and decrease malpractice claims [12]



- Interviewing skill

- information-gathering



- Malpractice claims

Communication: Why?

Effective communication is the basis of mutual understanding & trust.

Poor communication causes a lot of misunderstanding & hinders work & productivity.

Communication: Why? Cont.

Good Communication is needed to:

- Develop relationships
- Increase our knowledge
- Make our feelings and thoughts known
- Find out about people
- Find out information

Communication & Medicine

- **Historically** the emphasis was on the biomedical model in medical training which places more value on technical proficiency than on communication skills.
- **Recently** learning communication skills & evidence based practice become the corner stones of modern medicine.

Communication in medicine

- Increases patient satisfaction and health outcomes (Barlett, Grayson et al., 1984)
- Reduces the risk of complaint and litigation (Beckmam 1994)
- Higher levels of job satisfaction (Kramer et al., Suchman et al., 1993)

From the doctors What is required *Towards the patients*

- Listen to patients and respond to their concerns and preferences.
- Give patients information in way they can understand
- Taking patient's views into consideration when assessing their condition
- Respond to patients questions , keep them informed & share information .

From the doctors What is required (cont:) *Towards your patients*

- You must make sure, wherever practical, that arrangements are made to meet patient's language and communication needs.
- You must be considerate to relatives, carers and partners in providing information and support

From the doctors What is required (cont:)

Towards your colleagues

- Communicate effectively with colleagues within and outside the team
- Make sure your colleagues understand your role and responsibilities in the team and who is responsible for each aspect of patient care
- You must treat your colleagues fairly and with respect

Why do the doctors need to practice good communication?

- Doctors need to learn essentials of good communication more than other professionals because patients are humans with sensitive needs.
- Doctors cannot practice medicine without effective communication skills.
- Poor communication causes a lot of medico-legal and ethical problems.

Communication: With whom?

- Patients & care-givers
- Nurses & auxiliary staff
- Colleagues
- Administrators
- Reporting research findings
- Talking to the media
- Public & legislature

Where to apply our Communication skills ?

- The medical interview is the usual communication encounter between the doctor and the patient
- It can be classified according to the purpose of the interview into 4 types:

1. History taking

2. Consultations

**3. Obtaining informed
Consent**

4. Breaking bad news

Effective communication

- Ensures good working relationship
- Increases patients satisfaction
- Increases patients understanding of illness & management
- Improves patients compliance with treatment
- Reduce medico-legal problems
- Reduce uncertainty

Principles of effective communication

- Planning
- Interaction rather than a direct transmission
- Flexibility in relation to different individuals and contexts.
- Ability to handle emotional outbreaks

Communication with peers

Mutual trust & respect

Exchange information

Ask your seniors

Communication & Medical care

- Good communication should be established between the patient , the family and the treating multidisciplinary team.
- Patient & family should be encouraged to participate and verbalize in the ward round discussion about:
 - ✓ Offered medical care & treatment
 - ✓ Rehabilitation
 - ✓ Follow- up/re-admission plans
 - ✓ Doubts & worries.
 - ✓ **Proper information to patient and family regarding services available and how they can utilize them.**

Communication skills: Some techniques

- **PRACTICE**- fluent dialogue with patient
- **USE**- silence effectively, allowing patient enough time to express thoughts or feelings
- **ENCOURAGE**- patients with your supportive words
- **UTILIZE** - non-verbal communication

Listening vs Hearing

- **Hearing** - a passive activity; no effort
- **Listening**
 - ✓ Attention
 - ✓ Active involvement,
 - ✓ Full understanding
 - ✓ Takes time and effort

Barriers to effective communication

- Personal attitudes
- Ignorance
- Human failings (tiredness, stress)
- Language
- Poor time management
- Strenuous working environment

Conclusion

- Effective communication is the ***key to success in professional career.***
- Good communication is essential for proper doctor-patient relationship and ***help avoids problems of misunderstanding.***

Further reading

- **Effective Interact Interaction with Patients.**

Faulkner, A (2001), 2nd Ed. Churchill Livingstone, London.

- **Clinical Communication in Medicine**

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- **The Complete Guide to Communication Skills in Clinical Practice (pdf).**

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<https://www.mdanderson.org/documents/education-training/icare/pocketguide-texttabscombined-oct2014final.pdf>

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THANK YOU VERY MUCH

